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QUIET  
MUSIC

CHARLES EUGENE BANKS

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Truly yours  
Charles Eugene Banks

# QUIET MUSIC

By

CHARLES EUGENE BANKS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY OPIE READ.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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The strength that lives in gentleness spends not its force in sudden effort, but by its smooth persuasion works out its destiny. There is glory in a mighty chorus, but memories of tenderness, of home and of love come back to us when softer chords are touched. This book is deserving of its name — it is Quiet Music. Many of the poems have appeared in leading publications, and some of them are wandering about now, unfathered — the strolling children of Fancy, the orphans of Imagination.

This volume will find its way into many a household, and the cares of many a mother will be lightened by its soothing influence. And could there be a nobler mission? Great men have measured their science and rhymed their philosophy, but the spirit of true poetry is a strength to the weak, a consolation to the troubled in thought and a music unto all mankind.

OPIE READ.



## PREFACE.

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The title of this book is an index to my belief. I have a sublime faith in the force of Quiet. The stillness of Autumn moves more than the blustering Winter. These songs are the reflections of unpretentious dreams—the children of Silence and Meditation. Each fugitive piece will, to a degree, I trust, suggest to the reader some touches or colorings from the scenes and surroundings that inspired them.

THE AUTHOR.



# QUIET MUSIC.

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## THE GOSPEL OF REST.

I WATCHED them jostling in eager strife—  
    (Locks of auburn and locks of gray),  
Faces grown old with the cares of a life,  
    Faces grown old with a day.

And I paused to question, What better, O slave,  
    Fast chained to the loom, when the web is spun  
And the cloth of your weaving scarce covers a  
    grave—

    What better when all is done ?

Is it better to delve in the dust of trade,  
    Close hugging its gold with a miser's greed ?  
Or roam a barbarian free in the shade,  
    Unfettered by law or creed ?

To plunge in the sea where the breakers roar,  
    Or sit on the sand where the waves sing low ?  
To trouble the river with noisy oar—  
    Or drift with its quiet flow ?

Is it better to labor the long day through—  
    (The hope, elusive, is ne'er fulfilled)

Or loiter in shadow as dumb kine do,  
Let the field be fallow or tilled ?

The ark of wisdom may sometimes keep  
From the flood of sorrow, the man of care,  
But Noahs will lie in the sun asleep,  
And only the few be fair.

What better to burden the sportive brain  
With subtle reasoning — dim the eyes  
With constant seeking ? Lo ! yonder plain  
Breathes joy to the smiling skies.

Go roam where the nightingale sings to its mate !  
Where the moon spills silver in dusky pool !  
The heart of the wanderer laughs at fate  
When his feet with the dews are cool.

The beautiful butterfly, leaving its cell,  
Leaps up to the sun from the sun-baked wall ;  
Get wings ! If the worm may despise the shell,  
What need for the man to crawl ?

Is living a lesson so hard to learn  
That we still are writing the task in tears ?  
Let the gray dove mourn and the lone owl yearn,  
What are these to the song of the spheres ?

I watched them jostling in eager strife —  
(Locks of auburn and locks of gray,)  
Faces grown old with the cares of a life,  
Faces grown old with a day.

---

And I paused to question, What better, O slave,  
Fast chained to the loom, when the web is spun  
And the cloth of your weaving scarce covers a  
grave —  
What better when all is done ?

---

**THE SOUL OF LIFE IS LOVE.**

**T**HE world is as a sterile cliff ;  
But love is like the dew  
That falls upon it, and the moss,  
Like life, springs from the two.  
It creepeth o'er the barren stone  
Till all the place be verdant grown.

The world is as a blasted oak,  
But love is like the vine  
That trails it o'er ; its sunlit leaves,  
Like life the two entwine.  
The trunk is green that erst was bare,  
And blossoms kiss it everywhere.

The world is as a clouded sea,  
But love is like the sun  
That steals along the murky waves  
And brightens every one.  
O'er gloom is golden glory flung  
While sunbeams sport the waves among.

**LONG YEARS AGO.**

**L**ONG years ago, on arid ground,  
Beside a rocky ledge, I found  
A tiny flower in bloom ;  
The desert, bleak and bare and gray,  
All verdureless about us lay,  
Curled as the hand of doom  
Had touched and shriveled it ; alone  
The flower bloomed above the stone —  
A star above a tomb.

To-night, inquisitive of mood,  
I wandered where the demon brood  
Of want and hunger wait ;  
Where worth is sacrificed to might,  
And wanton creatures curse the Light  
In hovels desolate ;  
And ribald song and mocking jest,  
And shifting gaze and sunken chest  
Proclaim the fiend's estate.

And there in that discordant din,  
The heavy air red-ribbed with sin,  
I found a toddling child  
With face as pure and sweet and fair  
As e'er was fanned by Heaven's air,  
As angel's undefiled.  
"Lo ! Thou art everywhere," I cried ;  
And love will bloom where love hath died,  
To cheer the bleakest wild.



**THE FALSE NOTE.**

**D**OES a strain of exultation  
Steal, unbidden, to the tone,  
Voicing sympathy and comfort,  
When another's hope is flown?  
Does regret come slyly plucking  
At the sleeve, while we rejoice  
When another has succeeded  
By his deed, or pen, or voice?  
Hail the blemish in the blossom!  
Hail the discord in the tune!  
We should come to hate the roses  
Were the year a round of June.

---

**THE BETTER YEAR.**

**T**WO radiant stars in the long ago  
Shone fair on a world with the war aflame,  
And men grew gentler for Sappho's woe,  
And nobler because of a Roman's fame.  
Yet brute-blood lingered, and nobles heard  
The shriek of anguish without a sigh,  
And the veins of matron and maiden stirred  
And thrilled with pleasure to see men die.  
How pale thy passion, O singer sweet!  
How dim thy glory, O man of pride!  
In the love-light born where the two worlds meet,  
At the tomb of the Nazarene, crucified!

Are hands still crimson with life's dear bloom ?  
 Does love still bleed in the press of strife ?  
 Do sun-beams struggle through clouds of gloom  
 That rise from the furnace of sordid life ?  
 Behold the selfish turned strangely just,  
 The just grown gentle ; the kind, sincere !  
 While fruit displaces the hardened crust  
 In the softened glow of a better year !

---

**THE SILENT LAND.**

**G**OD'S language tells us we are One,  
 And somewhere, 'twixt the stars and sun,  
 The Vale of Peace in quiet lies,  
 Where human hearts grow truly wise ;  
 Where gliding spirits feed the mind  
 With truth ; where souls are not confined  
 To narrow paths, but roam at will  
 O'er mead and mountain, heath and hill ;  
 In fair Tacita's waters lave,  
 And, living, rest as in the grave.  
 A land wherein the woful word  
 That blinds the thought is never heard,  
 But soul with soul holds converse sweet,  
 In language soundless, full, complete.  
 Who enters there leaves speech behind,  
 For mind, illumined, reads the mind.  
 The gleaming walls that skirt it round

---

Have never heard the voice of sound ;  
Yet pæans swell and anthems roll  
Harmonious — music of the soul.  
To live will be to understand  
When we have gained the Silent Land.

---

**WHITTIER.**

I SAW the moaning ocean turn  
To leave the weeping land,  
And then come laughing back again,  
A white wreath in its hand.

I saw the full moon creep behind  
A cloud that hid its light,  
To re-appear high up above,  
A hundred-fold more bright.

I saw a herdsman lead afar  
His panting, thirsty flocks,  
I saw the waters burst for him  
In fullness from the rocks.

I saw the negro scourged and bound,  
I heard the hammer fall,  
And then the Nation's mighty voice :  
"Be free, my children, all !"

He trod where only prophets tread ;  
Put these sad symbols by,  
And bring them forth when one is dead —  
Our Whittier cannot die.

## WHO SHALL JUDGE ?

GOD made the Universe and hurled  
It forth to being, world on world.  
As hopefully the inventive boy  
Sets spinning his new-fashioned toy —  
But with this difference — Nature wrought  
Perfection from a perfect thought,  
And as 'tis true the spinning top  
Must, from its imperfections, stop,  
So true the world, of perfect plan,  
Will on forever. Dreaming man  
Sees only by imperfect light —  
Clear all things to the Infinite.  
Poor, blind humanity must feel  
Its way through life ; and woe and weal,  
E'er winding pathways, near allied,  
Running forever side by side,  
What wonder man so often strays  
From *that* to *this* throughout his days !  
To-day we deem ourselves sin-proof,  
And from the wayward hold aloof —  
To-morrow flounder deep in woes  
While he we scorned straight onward goes.  
The heart is truest, noblest, best,  
That makes a brother's grief its guest ;  
That gives to famished souls a feast  
And judgeth of its neighbor least  
The humble toiler trills along  
And lightens labor with a song —

---

The worshipers of Mammon sneer  
Because, mayhap, the poet's ear  
Hath caught the harmonies that roll  
In rhythmic cadence round his soul,  
Forgetful of the pen and brain  
That give the toiler his refrain.  
And poet, gentle still of heart,  
Sighs thoughtful, as he turns apart —  
"I'd rather be a lark and sing  
My song on free, empyreal wing,  
O'er-happy if, in Sorrow's throng  
One heart be lighter for the song,  
Than tuneless lord of boastful birth  
To banish Peace and throttle Mirth.  
And if at eve my pulsing breast  
To damp and chilly heath be prest,  
And frowning skies my comfort blight,  
I'll spring as gay at morning's light  
And pour my rippling melody  
Out o'er the field as full and free  
As though a thousand fairies strove  
To make my couch as warm as love."  
Thus minds, as worlds, still circle 'round,  
And truth 'twixt opposites is found —  
Thus every being bears a part  
To stir the blood in Nature's heart.  
And, when at last this worldly guise  
Shall vanish in the light of eyes  
True, perfect, clear as He shall give,

'Twill be our destiny to live  
 Where heart by heart is clearly read,  
 And, howsoe'er our paths we tread,  
 So shall we sup of woe or bliss  
 In that world, as we love in this.  
 And He, of all the life and soul,  
 Must view His product onward roll  
 Forever. For the worlds that be  
 Swim in an everlasting sea.

---

THE FALLEN LEAF.

FROM its brothers gay on the boughs at play —  
 Like the tear of a hidden grief  
 O'er the cheek of care — through the lambent air  
 Slow-drifted an idle leaf.

To be caught at last by the brook that passed  
 And sang to the boughs above,  
 Where it rose and fell with the dip and swell,  
 Like a brooch at the throat of love.

Then out on the stream, with a saucy gleam,  
 It was swept by the current down  
 Where the mists of gray from the rapids' play  
 Are pied with the rocks of brown.

Oh! the leaves that fall at the frost-king's call,  
 They are mourned as the dead may be,  
 But the one astray — how the home-hearts pray  
 For that one on the Somewhere Sea.

**UNDER THE CYPRESS.**

**B**ESIDE the river dark and deep —  
The curls a-cluster round her face —  
She lieth, as from Pleasure's chase  
O'erwearied, sunk to sudden sleep.

The somber cypress bows above,  
Wherein the gentle Zephyr seem  
To chant, accordant with the stream,  
A requiem o'er the death of Love.

The waters creep so carefully  
Among the shells and pebbled sands,  
And steal to touch her waxen hands —  
Dear hands are clasped so prayerfully.

What sweet simplicity of dress —  
Nor is there guile in this pure face,  
But only faith and gentle grace  
And loving trust and tenderness.

A barque so frail — O fateful praise ! —  
Life's sea should ne'er have ventured o'er,  
But kept its course along the shore,  
In sheltered nooks of quiet bays.

These simple lines tell all we know :  
" O God, forgive the wicked work !  
I may not sleep behind the kirk,  
But lay me where the daisies grow.

“Where sunbeams in the grasses lurk,  
 Where violets are first in bloom,  
 I may not lie in hallowed tomb—  
 ’Tis holy ground behind the kirk.”

What marvel that this calm retreat  
 Unwontedly her thought should woo,  
 It was the only path she knew  
 Led out to solitude complete.

Sad, staring eyes that seem to wait  
 The coming of this closing touch—  
 She loved, and, loving overmuch,  
 Some heart, some home is desolate.

---

**THE TURTLE DOVE.**

**O** DOVE, why linger thus alone?  
 Thy garb subdued, thy pensive tone,  
 Thy rhythmic, sad, recurrent moan  
 And listening pause,  
 Proclaim that thou hast anguish known,  
 Yet hide the cause.

Time was I smiled to hear thee coo,  
 And thought it but thy way to woo  
 A recreant lover to renew  
 His broken vow,  
 My heart with thine is tuned too true  
 To doubt thee now.



**TACITA.**

**T**HE eye that flasheth wordly pride,  
The lip that frameth worldly scorn,  
Are servants to a cruel heart  
That better never had been born.

Where Peace is queen the soul impels  
A softly radiant, constant beam,  
That falls upon the fretful world  
Like moonlight on a turbid stream.

Tacita, bend thy gaze on me,  
Unveil those almond orbs of thine,  
And let the moonlight of thy soul  
Into my troubled bosom shine.

Then, though the night of Care surround,  
Inspired by thee, my voice I'll rear  
And wake the silence to a song  
The vagrant winds shall hush to hear.

---

**MISMATED.**

**G**OOD-NIGHT," I cried ; they tossed me back  
"good-byes."

(What is a year ? A dead leaf in a flame),  
So quickly back and forth the shuttle flies,  
'Tis gone ere we have time the word to frame.

I see them now close standing side by side —  
He tall and strong, with eyes of Saxon blue ;

She lithe and slender, dark and dreamy-eyed,  
 A blushing rosebud freshed with morning dew.

She clinging as the climbing rosebush clings;  
 He like an oak that braves the wintry blast;  
 She warm and pulsing as the thrush that sings;  
 He calm and cold — a Viking of the past.

O heartless love, to bind the northern pine  
 And southland rose within your magic link;  
 The mountain torrent and the lowland wine,  
 The crag-bred eagle and the bobolink.

The year is past. I come again to-night,  
 Impatient-footed. Not a welcome breath;  
 The tropic's fervor loosed the snowy height  
 That, avalanching, bore them both to death.

---

#### LOVE'S TELLING.

I LOVE thee. The blood of my being  
 Seems all to be flooding my heart;  
 As the poor, hunted hare in the hedge-row,  
 At the sound of each accent I start —  
 Start forth but to shrink from the sunlight,  
 And creep back again to the shade,  
 Afraid of the stir in the grasses  
 My own timid movements have made.

O tongue, a most eloquent pleader  
 Art thou when I muse on her name!

Drawn near her ; my thoughts are as ashes  
Of words consumed in love's flame.  
Alone, sweetest phrases and glowing  
Are born of my being's desire.  
With her, I have nothing but silence —  
The heart in my bosom on fire.

O rose, for thy passionate language !  
O brook, for thy musical tones !  
My heart is o'erburdened with love-words,  
For speech I have nothing but moans.  
I will cast off the spell that enchains me —  
All the wealth of my passion I'll pour  
At her feet — O, I love thee ! I love thee !  
I love thee ! Ah ! can I say more ?

---

**HOPE.**

**W**HEN the weight of sorrow presses on the weary,  
weary heart ;  
When the future we have trusted fails to do its  
promised part  
As it sweeps into the present — when we shrink,  
deceived, betrayed,  
With the fruit of Expectation turning bitter in  
the shade  
Of the Tree of Knowledge reaching, with its elon-  
gated bough,

Through the shadow of the ages to the stern and  
staring now ;  
When the long-desired fulfillment, clasped at last  
in our embrace,  
Proves a chill and bloodless nothing with a stolid,  
painted face ;  
When the sinking sky is darkened with the gloom-  
ings of despair,  
Not a single star to brighten—only blackness  
everywhere—  
Comes a breeze so gently blowing, comes a warm  
and tender light,  
Stealing up the eastern heaven, and Despair and  
sable Night  
Slowly fade away together—Morning trips along  
the slope,  
And the spirit's Day breaks newly with the dawn-  
ing light of Hope.

---

**THE YEARS WENT BY.**

**I**N ye olden time, I have heard men say,  
A good man came in a quiet way  
Three times each day to a quiet bar,  
Where rare old liquors and wines from far  
Off lands of the sun were sold. He said—  
This dear, good man—that a soul of lead  
Must warm and brighten and stir and thrill  
With the cheer of a glass ; for a man of will

---

It held no dangers. Mark how it sends  
The rich, red blood to the finger ends!  
It quickens the intellect, softens the heart.  
Oh! he and judgment they ne'er should part—  
And the years went by.

A rude pine coffin in careless way  
Was tossed to the bed of a common dray,  
And on and on o'er the crowded pave  
The good man rode to a nameless grave.  
'Neath the damp, dull clay to his quiet rest,  
They laid him away with a ribald jest.  
With never a sigh, nor song, nor prayer,  
They left him to slumber in stillness there.  
And a meteor fell, and its light was gone:  
In God's half-acre the man slept on—  
And the years went by.

---

**SIMPLICITY.**

**G**OD gave the oak its strength to brave  
The winds from everywhere,  
And to the flower its suppleness—  
The strong above the fair.  
The tempest blows; the forest kings  
Toss in the clouds their locks.  
The storm is done; the flower looks up,  
The raindrops glistening in its cup—  
The oak is on the rocks.

## OCTOBER.

ALL day I have been in the woods alone,  
A day so quiet my soul could hear  
The soul of the forest in pensive moan —  
The soul of the forest in undertone,  
    Bewailing the dying year.

In dim, soft shadow I roamed at will  
    Where the brook, leaf-muffled and languid flows.  
So tensely tuned was the time, and still  
I could feel the heart of the forest thrill  
    With the presage of coming woes.

I could feel the heart of the forest beat  
    In sorrow at loss of its beautiful crown ;  
While up from the grasses an odor sweet —  
A faint, sweet odor arose to meet  
    The leaves that were floating down.

The bright green leaves of the summer, alas !  
    Now brown, and amber, and red, and gold —  
I fell with my face in the dying mass,  
For I felt the wings of a spirit pass,  
    And the touch of a hand was cold —

The gruesome touch of a ghostly hand  
    And the sigh of a soul's despair !  
For the foes of Life were abroad in the land,  
The wings of Destruction the forests fann'd,  
    And Beauty was dying there.

---

With my face in the dead, dull leaves I wept,  
(Dear leaves, so fair in the warm June weather!)  
And into my bosom a longing crept,  
That my soul with the soul of the leaves had kept  
On into the great Forever.

For precious to me was the summer's bloom —  
But the world cares little to understand ;  
To-night I sit in my lonely room,  
With my lonely life, in the still, gray gloom,  
A withered leaf in my hand.

---

**VICTOR HUGO.**

O MASTER of the earth's divine,  
Thy genius flushed our sky so bright  
That countless souls yet strong in thine  
Press upward toward the purer light;  
Stern-featured, thou wert quick as Christ  
To weep for griefs by others borne,  
And, ever from thyself enticed,  
Mourned that the world had cause to mourn.

Two million feet with solemn tread  
Beat out thy dirge in funeral train,  
But twice ten million hearts, O dead  
Yet living Hugo, join the strain;  
So long as right to might must kneel,  
Or, while there lives one fettered slave,  
Or slaves go free, or freedmen feel —  
So long shall tears bedew thy grave.

**THE PANSY.**

**T**HREE flowers in my garden grew;  
A lily, pansy, and a rose.

I questioned Psyche: "Tell me true,  
Which is most beautiful of those?"

The lily, hearing, reared its head.

"Behold the charm of grace," it cried.

"Voluptuous beauty here is bred,"

The blushing rose as quick replied.

The pansy, drooping on its stem,

Concealed its face with modest start.

"Alas!" I said, "pride ruins them"—

I wear the pansy in my heart.

**JUNE.**

**M**OST welcome, thou of lavish hand!

A subtle fragrance fills the land;

The sea is silver, and the strand

A wave of gold;

The fruit peeps forth on every hand,

And flowers unfold.

The verdant hills are proud to wear

Thy blushing favors, and declare

Thy purpled richness. Everywhere

Is glory spread,

And tree and shrub and earth and air

To beauty wed.



---

**POOR OLD WORLD.**

**P**OOR old world, thy sun's declining ;  
'Twixt thy two extremes a door  
Darkling shuts—within the dining,  
And without the starving poor.  
Bankrupt all ! We've banished pleasure,  
Passion rules the hearts of men—  
In the palace hoarding treasure,  
Cursing treasure in the den.  
Fled the saintly triple Graces,  
Fled their gentle sister Peace ;  
Gold has flattened human faces  
By the weight of its increase.  
Every lofty thought is smothered,  
Dead is Friendship's generous glow—  
See the race by Freedom mothered  
Unto Mammon bowing low.

---

**UNREWARDED.**

**T**O sing, that seemed his one delight.  
Betrayed of man, he sang for men,  
O'erfilled with gladness if he might  
But win the sad to smile again ;  
Poor in those things the mean adore,  
Rich in those things the gods revere  
He scattered largess from his store—  
The world repaid him with a sneer.

Ah! bright the face of Hope appears  
 To those by sad mischance distressed—  
 A sun that rainbows falling tears,  
 A moon that swims in Trouble's breast.  
 But cruel Fortune left him blind—  
 She gave the cross, but kept the crown—  
 He wrote his name upon the wind  
 And weighted it with thistledown.

---

#### THE DAY OF GIVING.

**I**N the amber days of Autumn,  
 When the mallows blush and glow  
 And the ambient upper ocean  
 Holds a crystal hint of snow,  
 Comes an hour of tender feeling  
 When sweet Charity holds sway  
 And a world is gently thoughtful  
 On the Nation's Giving Day.

Then the jocund-visaged pumpkin  
 Gives its wealth of toothsome gold,  
 Sandwiched 'twixt the snowy crustings  
 Into flaky tightness rolled,  
 And the oligarchic gobbler,  
 Child of pomp and indolence,  
 Gives his plump and luscious being  
 To the spit of recompense.

---

Now the man of many millions  
Gives a trifle from his store ;  
And the toiler strips his larder  
Of a good full half or more,  
While beneath the grinning rafters,  
Where the starving thousands lie,  
Lo! the dying give a blessing  
And the living give — a sigh.

Hasten, Father of the helpless,  
Hasten Thou the blessed morn  
That the faithful long have waited,  
Promised since the Christ was born,  
When the earth shall throb with kindness,  
Knowing not one bolted door  
Standing 'twixt the super-selfish  
And the hungry, heveled poor.

---

WISDOM.

WOULDST thou gather wisdom? Go  
Where the gentle streamlets flow,  
Where the flow'rets and the trees  
Sway in converse with the breeze ;  
Where around the mountain's poll  
Silence thunders to the soul.  
Mysteries from two concealed  
Oft to him are clear revealed  
Who, in solitude, alone,

Lingers where a flower is blown,  
 Feels the music as it passes  
 Of the marshal-hearted grasses  
 Pressing forward out of night  
 Into liberty and light.  
 Forth in evening's calm, to view  
 Heaven's star-lit vault of blue ;  
 Note the bull-bat's noiseless flight  
 Through the silver gray of night ;  
 List the crickets piping slip  
 From the clover ; watch the dip  
 Of the sword of Dian, prest  
 Slow into the mountain's breast,  
 Where he rears him, stern and grim,  
 On the Occidental rim.  
 Knowledge weaves of earthy things,  
 Wisdom mounts on eagle wings,  
 Wins the Parcæ's magic wand,  
 And peers into the world's beyond.

---

**HANDSOMEST OF ALL.**

**T**RUE, you may not call her handsome —  
 May not even deem her fair :  
 In her cheeks no roses blossom ;  
 Gold-gleams flash not in her hair ;  
 Smoother brows there are, and whiter,  
 Eyes that hold a gayer light —

---

Neither are her fingers taper  
Nor her hands as lilies white ;  
In her step there's nothing fawn-like,  
Low and tremulous her tones —  
But far dearer her possessions,  
Sweeter still the charm she owns.  
There are others worth admiring,  
Handsome if you will — but she  
Is my mother, tender, loving,  
Handsomest of all to me.

'Round her brow there winds a garland  
Of a thousand answered prayers ;  
In her hand she bears the lilies  
Of a thousand lightened cares ;  
Every tress that Time has silvered  
By an angel's kiss is blessed ;  
And her cheeks have burned their roses  
On the love-fires in her breast.  
With the strength her toils have wasted  
Manly hearts beat high to-day,  
Storing for her future comfort,  
Pouring gladness in her way.  
There are others worth admiring,  
Handsome if you will — but she  
Is my mother — tender, loving,  
Handsomest of all to me.

In this gentle, trustful clinging  
I can read the far-off past —

See myself as timid, falt'ring,  
 To her firmness anchored fast.  
 How she soothed each childish sorrow,  
 Smoothed each wrinkle from my brow,  
 Kissed away the tears and cheered me,  
 Even as I cheer her now.  
 Life is but a half-spelled sentence  
 Scattered o'er a blotted page,  
 But the heart that's true remembers  
 Age is youth and youth is age.  
 There are others worth admiring,  
 Handsome if you will — but she  
 Is my mother — tender, loving,  
 Handsomest of all to me.

---

**WHEN BESSIE COMES DOWN TO THE  
 SPRING.**

**T**HE daisies nod merrily one to the other,  
 The marigolds cling to the hem of her gown,  
 The chickens desert their excitable mother,  
 To clamor for favors, when Bessie comes down  
 With her pail to the spring. Oh, red and white  
 roses,  
 Not fairer are they, all a-bloom in the grass,  
 Than the bloom of her cheek — see how graceful  
 she poses,  
 To watch the cloud shadows that lazily pass ;

---

And birds linger, praiseful, on fluttering wing,  
When hazel-eyed Bessie comes down to the spring.

The rabbit peeps shyly from under his cover  
Of thick-blossomed lilac adorning the slope,  
To gaze with the eloquent eyes of a lover  
Where Bessie is tripping, like radiant Hope  
From the dream of a poet ; her free flowing tresses  
By arrows of sunlight pierced many times  
through —  
And Brindle comes lowing to meet her caresses ;  
The grass showing dark where she scatters the  
dew —  
While backward and forward complacently swing  
The minnows, when Bessie comes down to the  
spring.

Her charms owe no tax to the cold law of fashion,  
She had all her grace from the glorified One ;  
And her veins are as free of the latter-day passion  
As meadow-stream kissed by the beams of the  
sun.

No fairies beguile her — poor waifs of the attic —  
In operas fashioned to mountebanks' art,  
But she hears the lark's melody ripple ecstatic  
And full from his throat, whereon lieth his heart ;  
While up through the clover with giant-like swing,  
Comes Reuben to welcome sweet Bess at the  
spring.

**SWEET, BEAUTIFUL EYES.**

**S**WEET, beautiful eyes! Soft, beautiful eyes!  
 So tenderly, tranquilly, soulfully wise!  
 In their fathomless depths such beauty I see  
 That I bow the head and I bend the knee  
 In humble worship. O, love divine!  
 Unselfish affection; I see it shine  
 In those eloquent orbs. O land! O sea!  
 O limitless azure! O star gem'd skies!  
 Of all known treasures not one to me  
 So dear as the light of my lady's eyes.

O limpid, liquid, glorious eyes!  
 What care I for time, if it stays or flies,  
 When my life is lit by those radiant beams?  
 The work-a-day world with its sordid schemes,  
 It is nothing to me, for I live and move  
 In a separate, rhythmical realm of love.  
 The creeds of the earth they are nothing to me—  
 My altar, cathedral, my heaven is there;  
 And I bow the head and I bend the knee  
 To worship the eyes of my lady fair.

**MAY.**

**W**E heard not a sound of their marshaling feet,  
 Saw never the gleam of a spear,  
 Till their tents stood saucily fronting each street,  
 And the army of blossoms is here.



**LOVE'S ORACLES.**

**A**BOVE the hills the Orient sun  
Peeped through a mist of gold,  
That downward from his ardent gaze  
Into the valley rolled ;  
And fleeing Night, with jealous hand,  
Plucked from the changing skies  
Two sister stars, and refuge sought  
Within my lady's eyes.

That home once gained, she ne'er forsook  
(Why leave a place so fair ?)  
But set the stars, as lamps of love,  
To light the darkness there.  
Now I, to know how fickle Chance  
Her favors may bestow,  
In faith, consult those heavenly orbs  
That 'neath her eyelids glow.

---

**AN AUTUMN TRAGEDY.**

**M**ID-AFTERNOON. All overhead  
A trackless, blue expanse,  
Along the stream the sumac red  
Defiant rears his lance.  
The partridge in the hollows drum,  
The bannered maples gleam,  
And naked cotton-wood and plum  
Hang ghostly o'er the stream.

The brooklet, through an avenue  
 Of yellowed beach and elm,  
 Bears gaily on, with ants for crew —  
 A cricket at the helm —  
 A broad, frost-curl'd, catalpa leaf,  
 Its prow with silver crossed —  
 Two pebbles form a deadly reef,  
 The shipwrecked crew is lost.

---

**LOOK UP.**

[To L. M. W.]

**A**RT weary, love, despondent, weak?  
 Look up! the skies are thine;  
 What though to-day be cold and bleak,  
 The morrow's sun will shine.  
 So take my hand; 'tis firm and strong,  
 'Twill give you hope and cheer —  
 What if the way be dark and long,  
 If so that Love be near?

Look forward — never backward — heart;  
 The past comes not again.  
 The sunbeams on the mountain dart  
 Though clouds o'erhang the plain.  
 Up higher yet! The risk is great?  
 The prize is what you will;  
 The faithful sing at Heaven's gate,  
 The indolent are still.

**I KNOW.**

I KNOW that joy is everywhere,  
That trooping pleasures fill the earth,  
For all day long before my door  
The children sport in noisy mirth.

I know that Charity is queen,  
And kindness leavens more and more,  
For gates are open in the wall  
That once divided rich and poor.

I am not wise to answer those  
Who call me fool ; but this I know,  
That all the world is leal and true,  
Because the ones I love are so.

---

**THE POET.**

A POET is — why, naught but this :  
A throb'ing instrument, whose strain,  
When joyous, is most full of pain,  
When painful, rich in bliss.  
A fettered bird that longs to fly,  
Yet, freed, droops nerveless, idly by,  
Nor spreads its wings till, chain'd once more,  
It beats its life out in a vain attempt to soar.

A poet is — why, who can tell ?  
Companion of sweet Nature's joy,  
Fate's idle plaything, Passion's toy,

Combined of heav'n and hell.  
 He pores above the Book of Man,  
 Its close-writ pages each to scan,  
 Learns every thought to feel and state,  
 And rides o'er darkling cares and woes elate.

This is a poet ; more than this,  
 He knows the grandeur heroes feel  
 When surging on with naked steel  
 Where death's hot missiles hiss ;  
 With them he scales the battlements  
 Through battle smoke and carnage dense,  
 With blood-dyed blade and batter'd shield,  
 Till waves their flag triumphant o'er the field.

This is the poet, ay ! and more ;  
 His fate it is to hold and bound  
 A soul that, like a sea of sound,  
 Breaks on a farthest shore.  
 Through darkness of the length'nd night  
 To labor with a Heav'n-born might  
 Distilling dewdrops, pure and clear,  
 That diamond-like touch up the worldly ear.

---

**MARCH.**

**P**ALE autumn moves, with gentle tread  
 And quiet air, among the dead ;  
 March whips the sullen sky to tears,  
 And lo ! the violet appears.

**ETERNITY.**

GO where the tow'ring precipice  
G Frowns on the climbing sea ;  
Go where the frightened air resounds  
With Erie leaping free ;  
Go where the hungry-featured crowd  
About the custom-place,  
Their fingers white with clutching tight  
The curse of Adam's race —  
And then at quiet hour of night  
Go muse upon the stars  
That fret the sweeping arch of heav'n  
With all their countless bars,  
And know that when this heaving mass  
Is fallen to decay,  
Those stars will shine serenely on  
And on and on alway.

---

**GRANT—A REQUIEM.**

THOUGH Sierras' crags enfold me  
T Where to-night I sit alone ;  
Though no human tongue hath told me,  
Yet I know that he is gone.  
  
For the winds that erst were sighing  
In the swaying boughs o'erhead,  
"He is dying ! He is dying !"  
Now are moaning, "He is dead !"

Till the clouds, symphonious roaring,  
 Clasp the shiv'ring mountain round,  
 Deep into the cañons pouring  
 Monodies of mournful sound.

Quick, recurrent fires go reeling  
 Through the sable skies and light  
 Earth's tumultuous breast, revealing  
 All the storm's majestic might.

And behold ; with aspect solemn,  
 High above, the god of war  
 Leading forth an endless column  
 Toward th' one unclouded star.

Soldier spirits long have slumbered,  
 Deaf to bugle, fife and drum,  
 Waiting in their graves unnumbered,  
 Waiting till the chief should come.

On they sweep, a line unbroken,  
 Through the sky with steady tread —  
 Though no human tongue hath spoken,  
 Thus I know that Grant is dead.

---

**LESLIE E. KEELEY.**

**C**LOSE reef that name, each added title trim,—  
 What matter titles to a man like him?  
 The thing he did, and not the words he said,  
 Will move a world to weep him when he's dead.

**SOLITUDE.**

[Respectfully dedicated to Leslie E. Keeley, M. D., LL. D.]

**T**HE black-winged tempest of the night  
Its wrathful course had run,  
And, like a tired child, the sea  
Slept in the noon-day sun.

Far shoreward stretched the moor-lands wide,  
Marked by a single oak —  
The Storm King's fiery saber smote  
And killed it at a stroke.

A barren beach swept to the right  
In long, low-swirling drifts,  
While gray and cold upon the left  
Uprose the beetling cliffs.

Before the sea so hushed and still,  
It only moved to sigh,  
And overhead the boundless blue  
Of an unclouded sky.

The mellow sunlight on the land,  
The sunlight on the wave,  
The sea a-beat against the cliff  
Like Love against a grave.

On jutting crag a fish-hawk plumed  
His steel-blue, glassy coat,  
Then headlong plunged into the wave,  
The death-cry in his throat,—

A cry that echoed far and wide ;  
 But one who soundly slept  
 Where shelving beach and waters met,  
 Unbroken silence kept.

The sunlight in her clinging robe,  
 The sunlight in her hair,  
 The waters lispings at her feet  
 Held all of life was there.

No eye to weep, no voice to mourn,  
 No touch of loving hand ;  
 All waxen-white and still she lay  
 Alone upon the sand.

The timid Zephyr nearer crept,  
 And one, more kind and bold,  
 Upraised her hair and veiled her face  
 With half its wealth of gold.

Alone she lay who yesterday  
 Was half a city's pride,  
 The queen of speechless solitude  
 And desolation's bride.

---

**APRIL—EVENING.**

**T**HE virgin leaves in friendly play,  
 The thrush a-tremble with his lay,  
 The snipe's dull boom, the plover's call,  
 The robin's treble winding through it all.



---

**SUB ROSA.**

**S**O small a thing as one wee kiss ;  
You surely won't refuse me this ?  
From all your store, you'll never miss —  
There ! tell me, Bright-eyes, tell me true,  
You rather like it ? Yes, you do !

Is there a bee from such a flower  
Would flee till drunken in the bower ?  
How ? No, this is the quiet hour ;  
We're unobserved. What if who knew ?  
Oh, so you like it ? Yes, you do !

He who would kiss and tell, must be  
Still more devoid of heart than he  
Who scorns to kiss at all. And see,  
Now that you're certain I'll be true,  
For each I give I get back two.

---

**FORSAKEN.**

**O** SHADOWS of Erebus, hide me ;  
The day has no pleasure for me.  
Nor human nor angel may guide me ;  
I drift on an under-world sea.  
Shut in by the mountains of Reason,  
Storm-beaten by Reason's disdain —  
A cycle declined to a season,  
An unbroken winter of pain.

Shut in by a custom unshaken,  
 Shut out from the sweetness of home ;  
 From visions of joy I awaken,  
 To battle with demon and gnome.  
 My soul, as a bird of the morning,  
 Went soaring and singing thy name ;  
 Now, stripped for thy selfish adorning,  
 It creeps back in darkness and shame.

The hands that so gently caress thee  
 Held lashes to scourge me ; the lips  
 That trouble sweet heaven to bless thee  
 Curse me to the verge of eclipse.  
 God pity them, dearest ! God pity !  
 For myself, I shall finish the jest  
 With a meaningless laugh through the city,  
 Then to sleep in the River of Rest.

---

**HE WROTE FOR ALL.**

“**T**HE world is cruel, careless, cold,”  
 I sighed, “and cares for naught but gold !  
 Why should my troubled pages plead  
 A brother’s woe — a brother’s need !”

“My song is drowned in Mammon’s roar,”  
 (I flung my pen upon the floor),  
 “The hand that Fortune stoops to bless  
 Must crush the buds of tenderness,”

---

My toddling wee one put the pen  
Into my trembling hand again,  
And, clambering upon my knee,  
Said, archly: "Papa, wite for me."

I wrote — a homely, childish tale  
Of hope and love — no pensive wail  
Of others' wrongs — but what her smile  
Had wakened in my heart the while.

And when the ink had scarcely dried,  
I heard the song on every side ;  
It filled the land from sea to sea,  
While thousands cried, "He wrote for me."

---

**TO A WOUNDED BIRD.**

**P**OOOR little warbler! harmless thing  
That late on buoyant, sportive wing,  
High up among the clouds, did'st sing  
Thy glad refrain,  
Now helpless at my feet you fling,  
A slave to pain.

Thy voice, that erst, so full and clear,  
Was wont my lonely heart to cheer,  
Now shrill with pain and piteous fear—  
Cheering no more—  
Wins for itself but Sorrow's tear,  
And grieves me sore.

---

Poor songster ! not thy voice alone  
 From troubled breast sends up its moan,  
 Thine not the only pleading tone  
     Of breaking heart —  
 So man must ever sigh and groan  
     E'en from the start.

'Tis thus the mortal that has found  
 Thee, blasted by a cruel wound,  
 Gropes ever darkly 'round and 'round,  
     With mind untaught,  
 Striving with many a useless bound  
     A flight of thought.

So must he ever panting lie,  
 Far, far below Hope's glowing sky,  
 To which he fain would quickly fly  
     In loving trust,  
 But ever with a feeble cry  
     Falls in the dust.

---

**SISTERS OF MERCY.**

**T**HEIRS is the holy beauty that in the lily dwells,  
 Or sways the purple clover when chime the  
     distant bells ;  
 The sweet, unspoken beauty, too delicate to trace,  
 That hideth in the heart to light the plainest  
     human face.

## RETRIBUTION.

AT last you are home from the carnival? I —  
By my faith, 'tis a regal head —  
Have been pondering here, as the hours went by,  
On the fleshless hand and the rayless eye.  
List, madam, our child is dead.

Is dead, I tell you — asleep, asleep.  
Keep silence, and wake her not!  
I watched her going, but did not weep,  
And only one crimson spot —  
You would see our darling? 'Twill be as well.  
So, lay the jewels aside,  
And all these shimmering robes that tell  
Of the stately measure and cadent swell,  
Of the sinuous sweep and glide  
Of the amorous waltz. Am I harsh? And thou,  
Oh, gentle and loving mind!  
With thy jeweled throat and thy painted brow —  
And have you reason to chide me now  
With cruelty? I unkind!

It likes me better, this simple dress;  
What a small, small throat, my love!  
Do you shrink from my touches of tenderness?  
Time was you were hungry for each caress,  
And cooed in return like a dove.

We will go together, and you may weep —  
Your breath — my fingers are steel!

O'er that silent couch with its snow-white heap  
Of marble beauty in breathless sleep.

What, Love! you falter and reel!

So well I loved her, *our* child, my dear—

What say you? Believe, you true?

And she was so pretty I had a fear

The world might claim her and leave me here

Alone when she older grew.

And I rocked her to sleep in my shielding arms

(Did you dance with the count to-night?)

I rocked her, and whispered: The world's alarms

Shall never come near you, nor shall your charms

Grow pale in a lover's sight.

And I said I would keep her, the bloom on her  
cheeks—

There, still as the child you've grown,

And white as the snow on the mountain peaks,

Soft by our little one—ha! who speaks?

I have had my way with my own.

---

#### EASTER LILIES.

WHAT though you build cloud-high the wall,  
What though the sword you constant wield!

All kingdoms, monarchies shall fall

Because of these—and over all

Shall stand the lilies of the field.

## UNDER THE BLOSSOMS.

A MID-MAY evening, calm, serene ;  
The stars assembling faintly smiled  
On undulating fields of green,  
On woods where plum and apple wild,  
Their every bough a globe of bloom,  
With fragrant odors filled the air,  
On stream that in the softened gloom  
Of woodland shade sang sweetly there.

With figure bent and falt'ring pace,  
Up from the vale a pilgrim came ;  
Pale Want had pinched and limned his face,  
And Sin, Regret and Passion's flame  
Had so consumed him that he moved  
As one who, having Charon proved,  
Was come again to stroll among  
The rich, full beauties of the plain.  
'Twas like a glorious anthem sung,  
Wherein is one discordant strain.

Just underneath the blushing bough  
He knelt beside the brook, to cool  
His fevered throat and throbbing brow.  
"Dear spot," he murmured, "worse than fool  
Was I, to leave so fair a place  
For city's glare and blaze and roar.  
O Innocence, thy gentle face  
Shall smile upon me nevermore !"

He paused. Among the tender leaves  
 The straying Zephyr sadly sighed.  
 "And is there any heart that grieves  
 To-night for me?" he sudden cried.  
 "Ah, God!" At that great word he bowed  
 His head until the grasses swept  
 His sunken cheek, and sobbed aloud,  
 And prayer broke from him while he wept.

THE PRAYER.

"Sweet Spirit! Universal All!  
 Pure source of gentleness and love!  
 Who hearest e'en the sparrow call,  
 I, to the verge of madness drove,  
 Hard ridden by a devil horde  
 Of scourging fiends, at last to Thee,  
 Though late, I come; Thou art the Lord —  
 Oh, be Thou merciful to me.

"About my head the tempests drive,  
 My feet are set in sinking sands,  
 Within me evils live and thrive,  
 To tear the good with cruel hands.  
 On Virtue I have shut the door;  
 My heart is lead, O Galilee!  
 Thy love, Thy favor I implore —  
 Dear Lord, be merciful to me."

. . . . .  
 He slept. Above him sang a thrush;  
 The twilight deepened into night,



And, in the still and holy hush,  
The blossoms, delicately bright,  
Came slowly down from branch and bough,  
In fragrant clouds — came down to hide  
The shame of sin and wreck of pride.

---

They found him there at morning light,  
All wrapped in robes of pink and white —  
And peace was on his brow.

---

### GOOD AND BAD ANGELS.

#### I.

O WOMANKIND! Sweet, gentle womankind!  
The charm of thought and solace of the mind,  
The star of day, the moon of being's night,  
The student's angel and the world's delight;  
Dear Nature's book of poesy complete —  
Thou soul-inspiring, dreamful, bitter-sweet,  
The fool's elixir and the sage's wine —  
A sunbeam in the somber-mantled pine!  
The rose of friendship and the dew of love —  
The dimpled brook that flashes smiles above —  
Gay smiles of mischief to the glow'ring sun,  
No man's complete till thou and he art one.

#### II.

O wretched soul, a conflagration dread,  
Within the confines of thy being spread!

What direful passions through thy bosom rage,  
 Like untamed beasts new-broken from the cage!  
 The Virtues flee thee, weeping as they go,  
 To view their temple desecrated so;  
 Their beauteous temple, once so pure and fair,  
 All charred and blackened — sunk in sable air —  
 The perfumed altar sacrificial, where  
 They often knelt in consecrated prayer,  
 O'erthrown, defiled, the home of passions vile,  
 Where fateful knowledge mocks at artless guile;  
 A conquered kingdom, late the Graces' home,  
 Now ruled and ruined by the ghoul and gnome —  
 O spirit stars, set in the heaven of life  
 To guide mankind through Fate's destroying  
     wave!  
 When once dethroned, of every evil rife,  
 Thou'rt beacons false alluring to the grave.

---

#### A SUMMER PICTURE.

**I**N curving silken hammock hung,  
 She slowly back and forward swung;  
 Her left hand tost above her head,  
 And in her right the book she read,  
 Or seemed to read; yet each white lid,  
 Blue-veined and heavy-fringed, half hid  
 Her brown-black eyes, whose dreamy light  
 Shone like a half-seen star at night,  
 When veil-like mist o'erhangs the air —

---

And told her thoughts were otherwhere.  
Her wealth of yellow tresses caught—  
By silver bangles, Venice-wrought—  
Back from her brow, full, broad and low  
And trackless as new-fallen snow,  
Swept sloping downward, wave on wave,  
To hide the foam-white shoulders, save  
Where, 'twixt the parted, golden strands,  
They gleamed like pearls half hid in sands.

One dainty, slippered foot peeped out—  
Its arching instep bound about  
With narrow bands of black and gold—  
From underneath the foam-like fold  
Of fluffy gown—greensward beneath,  
The trees above a giant wreath;  
She seemed not born of earthly strife,  
But marble starting into life.

---

**THE BITTER-SWEET VINE.**

SHE came in the dawn of a sweet May morn,  
Laden with blossom and berry—  
A woman with locks like the ripened corn,  
To a Southern cemetery.

The mounds swelled round like a summer sea  
Stirred by a gentle wind;  
Beyond the stretch of a wide-spread lea,  
The shadowy forest behind.

Down by a grave with a bitter-sweet vine,  
Twining and trailing it over,  
In the soft, rich glow of the morning's shine  
She knelt in the nodding clover.

Knelt and bowed till the sad, white face  
Cozened the dew-starred grasses,  
Still as the nun in some holy place  
When the Virgin spirit passes.

Screened by a vine at the self-same grave  
Was another figure kneeling,  
With hair as white as the ocean's wave  
Before the hurricane reeling.

Their prayers are done and they rise as one —  
Each starts at sight of the other ;  
Said the younger : " This grave is the grave of my  
son."

The elder : " Nay, I am his mother ;

" I came o'er his ashes to weep and pray."  
The younger : " I tell you true,  
My boy sleeps here, and he wore the gray."  
" Not so, but mine of the blue."

" There is some mistake," cried the gray-haired  
dame ;  
Said she of the yellow braid :  
" You'll find on the marble my dear boy's name,  
You surely have been betrayed."

They sought for the spot by the vines o'ergrown,  
And, crowding the leaves away,  
Lo! two names carved in the mossy stone —  
The name of the blue and the gray.

One look they gave, then suddenly turned  
To clasp in a warm embrace —  
The rising sun in its splendor burned,  
And glorified all the place.

The snow-white locks of the Northern land  
And the warm, rich Southern wave  
In peace are mingled as hand in hand  
They kneel by the dual grave.

---

**THE WATCHER BY THE SEA.**

**L**ONG years of watching have dimmed her eyes,  
That once were bright as stars i' the sea,  
And over her temples, like snow-drift, lie  
The locks that once were rich as the dye  
Of the purple grape on the tree.

She dwells in a cottage high o'ercrowned  
By cliffs that shadow the breakers white,  
And Yule-tide, ever it comes around,  
Still finds her waiting with holly crowned,  
Repeating with voice of tremulous sound,  
" 'Tis Christmas Eve and the time is past,  
The waiting and weeping are over at last,  
My rovers come home to-night.

“The bells will ring i’ the hour, they said —  
Blow softly what winds may blow —  
I have decked with holly my Robbie’s bed,  
That cosily stands in the room o’erhead,  
With its linen as white as snow —  
As white as the snow on the window-sill —  
As white as the snow that is lying still  
On the still, white graves below.

“Graves! Only the feeble and old for graves!  
We are strong, we have naught to fear!  
Comes the grand, good ship o’er the dancing waves  
That brings to my bosom my rover braves,  
My mate and my boy so dear.

“My mate and my red-cheeked Robbie to-night  
Again in my arms shall meet,  
And their thick curls gleam like gold i’ the light  
Of the fire that never will burn so bright  
As when they sit at my feet.

“He is ten years old when the clock strikes three —  
Our Robbie — he’s growing old!  
Last April it was that my mate and he —  
Who says they will never come back to me?  
Ah, God, but the world is cold.

“I’ve waited so long — they’ll soon be here —  
Was that a step at the gate?  
Or only the wind in the lilac near —  
The wind that startles my soul with fear,  
The wind I worship — and hate?

---

“I dreamed — when was it ? — a dream so dread —  
I saw myself sitting here,  
Awaiting my loves, and there came instead  
Some sailors bringing them in to me dead,  
Both dead on a single bier.

“With the drip, drip, drip of the salt sea brine,  
Drip, drip from their locks of gold ;  
In their cold blue eyes there was never a sign —  
My dead mate clasping his boy and mine,  
As dead as himself and cold.

“A dream, but it chilled all the founts o’ my soul.  
Oh, warm with their kisses I’ll grow ;  
The bells are ringing — no, no, they toll !  
Or is it the ocean’s monotonous roll ? —  
There is naught but a mound in the snow.”

Long years of watching have dimmed her eyes,  
That once were bright as stars i’ the sea,  
And over her temples, like snow-drift, lie  
The locks that once were rich as the dye  
Of the purple grape in the tree.

---

#### DISCOVERY.

THE jewel, Wisdom, in the mine of Thought  
Lies bedded deep where toilers sore have  
wrought,  
Or, be their search in old veins or in new,  
The miners many, the discov’ers few.

**HAPPY THE MAN.**

**H**APPY the man who in some rural glade  
 Contented dwells, nor of its confines tires ;  
 The rich, sweet soil upturning with his spade  
 Where the dark earth, with little toil, is made  
 To yield sufficient for his few desires.

The rush and turmoil of the greedy town,  
 Its sin and pride and shame, to him unknown ;  
 Nor beggar's whine, nor surly Mammon's frown ;  
 Nor crack-voiced venders crying up and down,  
 Nor drunkard's oath, nor ruined Virtue's moan.

Instead, the morning pulsing full with life,  
 O'erflooded with the varied song of birds ;  
 The pure, fresh air with scent of flowers rife —  
 Nor discord here, nor sound of sordid strife ;  
 But eloquence without disturbing words.

With swelling breast he roams the dewy meads,  
 The meanest flow'r his joy and tender care ;  
 The murm'ring winds that stir the tangled reeds,  
 Fit orchestra adapted to the needs  
 Of Nature's drama acted for him there.

Of castle massive often he has read,  
 Of mosque, of temple and cathedral grand —  
 Yet turns for beauty to the fields instead,  
 Finds some new pleasure wheresoe'er he tread,  
 In meadow, wood or on the yielding sand.



The cliff abrupt; the river's silver flow;  
The eagle's flight; the tempest-ridden wind;  
The gleaming salmon swinging to and fro  
In quiet pool, the timid, graceful roe —  
All dear companions of his student mind.

For him the peace of close converse with God.

To him the door of Nature opens wide;  
The woods, the hills, the daisy-spangled sod,  
He loves them all. Where others blindly trod  
He moves serene — his being satisfied.

Amid such scenes his gentle life is passed,

The ward of Wisdom, learning what is best;  
His creed to love, his church the vaulted vast,  
In contemplation richest at the last —  
He falls asleep upon a kindly breast.

---

**REFLECTION.**

**W**HERE playful lamps serenely skip  
O'er emerald green and blossomed slip,  
A sage, with measured pace, came by  
And marking all with thoughtful eye,  
Exclaimed, with tender, thoughtful smile:  
"Poor creatures! but a little while  
The grass will spring, the storm will rage,  
Above the grave of lamb and sage.  
The wise, the great, the reasonless,  
The spangled sod alike shall press;  
Your little hour of life you spend

In sportful pleasure ; we extend  
 Our thought from this to other spheres  
 To win — a recompense of tears.  
 You hope not, doubt not, fear not ; I  
 Do all by turns and yet must die  
 At last as ignorant as thou.  
 The studious mind but lines the brow  
 And stirs to bitter, fierce unrest  
 The flame-tongued forces in the breast.  
 All into one great Dark must grope  
 With but the flickering lamp of Hope  
 To guide them,— as the fire-fly's light  
 Is to the thunder-clouded night,  
 E'en so it shows, now there, now here,  
 Now far removed, now blazing near,  
 An ignis fatuus while we stay,  
 What proof 'twill better lead the way  
 When, shorn of every subtle sense,  
 We plunge into the guessed Immense ?”  
 The sage passed on to cry, “ Alas !”  
 The lambkins nipped the tender grass.

---

#### INDUSTRY.

**T**HE toughest wood with brightest blaze will  
 greet :  
 The hardest nut contains the sweetest meat ;  
 So wisdom, gained by light of midnight oil,  
 Gives richest recompense for patient toil.

**THE GOOD IN EVERYTHING.**

I AIN'T jes' got my bearin's on these Socialistic facts,

An' I'm summat undecided 'baout the scheme o' Single Tax,

But all year round I'm pullin' strong with any man ur creed

'At gits a crowd together fur a feller-bein's need.

I ain't sot on no theory, nur any special plan

To bring about redemption. T' me the average man

Is puz'lin' es a gol' mine—so many slants an' shifts—

Ain't like to strike it payin' till yo've sunk a dozen drifts;

But one thing naow I know es well es any man a-talkin',

The bad ain't all in kerriges, nur all the gu'd a-walkin'.

Take my ole mare—o' humble birth—she'd never captur' Bonner,

But fleet Maud S., pert—speedy tew—with all her gewgaws on her,

'Ud never pull me half so safe. I take more comfort with her

A joggin' through the pastur' lan's an' long the windin' river,

Than he can git a-flyin' o'er a road o' powdered  
 mortar  
 An' feelin' 'at his nag don't pass es many es she'd  
 orter —  
 But both on 'em ha' got their pints, thar ain't no  
 sulks nur balkin' —  
 The bad ain't all in kerriges, nur all the gu'd  
 a-walkin'.

Thar's few on us 'll edge t' square, fur Natur' runs  
 t' bevels,  
 But if there is a dearth o' saints thar ain't so many  
 devils.  
 The truth is, minor strains o' gu'd run through  
 the most o' cre'tur's —  
 We ain't all han'sum, but we've all got some  
 redeemin' fe'tur's ;  
 An' when y' come across a man 'at seems supremely  
 bad,  
 Jes' fin' the stone 'at's shuttin' out the sunshine  
 from the lad,  
 An' if you len' a kin'ly han' t' roll that stone away,  
 You'll see a shoot come peepin' up t' greet th'  
 cheerin' day,  
 An' spreadin' out its tiny han's, an' by an' by t'il  
 bloom,  
 An' when the crucifiers cum they'll fin' an empty  
 tomb.

Now Paul was sich a feller, mos' cruel, hard an'  
col'.

He'd titles, too, an' honors, an' a cheriot, o' gol',  
But when he turned he giv' his life fur Him he'd  
been a-mockin' —

The bad ain't all in kerriges, nur all the gu'd  
a-walkin'.

Las' week I seed a workin'man, es po'r es po'r cu'd  
be,

With nothin' to pay taxes on, except 'twas misery,  
Put down his dinner-pail an' turn to cheer an' mil'ly  
chide

A tipsy, broken 'ristocrat who talked o' suicide ;  
An' yiste'day I seed the man that poor mechanic  
saved,

All shinin' sleek in broadcloth, jes' newly primp'd  
an' shaved,

Go down a muddy alleyway whar' lay a sodden  
wight,

An' bear him tenderly beyon' the shoutin' rabble's  
sight,

An' that is why I'm moved t' say, for all the  
gloomy talkin',

The bad ain't all in kerriges, nur all the gu'd  
a-walkin'.

So while on one side Selfishness is keepin' what it  
gets,

An' on the other Envy raves an' curses, fumes an'  
     frets,  
 Th' quiet people sweep along th' road a-tween th'  
     two,  
 A gettin' gentler all th' time because o' good they  
     do,  
 A gettin' nearer, nearer yet t' that delightful time  
 When ev'ry man 'll seek th' true in ev'ry lan' an'  
     clime,  
 When Ekal Rights 'll compass all th' surface o' th'  
     earth,  
 An' man'll rank fur what he is despite o' wealth ur  
     birth —  
 Thar won't be any lan'lord then behin' th' tenant  
     stalkin'  
 An' gu'd 'll ride on ev'ry side, with Satan, maybe,  
     walkin'.

---

#### ON THE BORDER.

**W**E grew to manhood, Jim and I,  
     Just where the border line  
 Cut through the homes of low and high  
     As lightning cleaves the pine ;  
 And from the passion-storm that swept  
     The land from sea to sea  
 Two crafty tiger-spirits crept  
     And parted him and me.

---

The South he loved was not so much,  
A languorous, dreamy girl,  
And I, ah! well, I bear this crutch  
Because of one bright curl  
That danced above a pair of eyes  
As mild as skies in May —  
I donned the blue for Ann Elize,  
For Jess he took the gray.

A year went by, while cannons ploughed  
The fields our care had tilled ;  
Where seas of golden wheat had bowed  
A Nation's blood was spilled.  
The sentry marched where love had stayed,  
And trampled meadows turned  
Their brooks red-streaked into the glade  
Where hostile camp-fires burned.

The sweep of war had brought our lines  
Quite to the dear old spot,  
And somehow in the whispering pines  
A song but half forgot —  
A something half remembered drew  
Me out alone to roam  
Along the path so well I knew  
Toward my boyhood's home.

Not mine alone to disregard  
The drums retiring taps —  
Behold ! Jim distant scarce a yard —

When we, two roguish chaps,  
As ever caught the whistling rule  
Upon the shielding book,  
Together held one bench at school,  
He wore the self-same look.

Two miles away, by marching spent,  
Slept eighty thousand men,  
The brook, a silver ribbon went  
Full softly down the glen,  
And stealing bright through leaf and bough  
The moon lit up the space  
Where we, once friends, sworn foemen now,  
Stood silent, face to face.

My sword leaped naked to the night —  
Untouched his idly swung  
Upon his thigh, but free and light  
His mellow laughter rung,  
The while he cried, "Put up your steel,  
We'll fight what time we must,  
Where cannons boom and squadrons wheel,  
And madmen bite the dust.

"But now, as comrade huntsmen come  
O'erwearied from the chase —  
Beyond the call of fife and drum,  
In this familiar place —  
We'll sit us down and quiet chat  
Of simple, homelike joys,



---

Forgetful of the war and that  
We're anything but boys!"

I threw my sword upon the ground  
And grasped his proffered hand ;  
His voice just then the cheeriest sound  
In all the troubled land ;  
Then, stretched along the grassy slope,  
We watched the moon drift on,  
And talked of home and love and hope  
Until the night was gone.

Next day the opposing forces met  
Midst smoke and roar and din,  
And all the ground with blood was wet  
For Hate to struggle in,  
While men, mere pawns to leaders wise,  
Of death made awful mirth,  
And lids fell down o'er flashing eyes  
To lift no more on earth.

In charging through the dear old farm  
We met, friend Jim and I—  
My saber shore him of an arm,  
His bayonet pierced my thigh.  
Then all night long beneath the stars,  
We lay and moaned with pain —  
If great men knew the cost of wars  
Would there be war again ?

I have no heart to sing of strife ;  
 Each deed of valor done  
 Costs some brave fellow limb or life  
 Or e'er the prize be won.

It likes me more in peace to dwell  
 Among my fowl and kine,  
 Where Love a sleepless sentinel,  
 Keeps ward for me and mine.

And yet, while Ann Elize and Bill,  
 And Bess and little Sue  
 Are over yonder on the hill  
 To drop a rose or two,  
 'Tis good to know that Jim and Jess,  
 Down there in Tennessee,  
 Are tossing bloom of tenderness  
 On those who fought with me.

---

**A DIRGE.**

**S**OFTLY move, softly tread ;  
 From my life the light is fled—  
 Maimie's dead.

Whisper soft, whisper low —  
 Oh, the bitter, bitter woe !  
 She lies low.

See this stem ! A blossom fair  
 Yesterday 'twas clinging there —  
 Now 'tis bare.

**TWILIGHT IN A CHURCH-YARD.**

**K**NEELING here beside thee, darling, while the  
twilight softly steals  
Like a nun, gray-veiled and quiet, from the  
cloister-wood, and wheels  
Through the heavens grand Orion — kneeling  
here at eve alone,  
Where the rose-bush clings and trembles round  
your crumbling burial-stone ;  
Though my ears be dulled with hearing through  
long years the din of life,  
I can hear your voice as plainly as when first you  
murmured “ Wife, ”—  
Hear your voice as full and tender as the ring-  
dove’s plaintive call  
O’er the new-reaped clover meadow in the days of  
early Fall.

O that life, so full of richness, bright as June  
beneath the sky  
Of the semi-tropics ; heart-beats short the days  
flew by ;—  
How the robin’s pulsing treble seemed to voice the  
love that swept  
Through my being ; closer, closer in your shield-  
ing arms I crept ;  
Wishing nothing, fearing nothing, living only in  
the beam

Of your dear eyes bent above me. Let the night-  
 hawk swoop and scream ;  
 What have I to fear ! The blackness of the dark-  
 ness ? Here I bide,  
 It is thy dear voice that calls me, and I know  
 thou hast not died.

---

**A CHRISTMAS CAROL.**

**R**ING out, ring out, ye choral bells,  
 A pæan to the morn ;  
 Your speech, in cadent measure tells  
 Of blessings newly born ;  
 But be your tones as pure and clear  
 As cloistered maiden's prayer,  
 For all of earth is listening here,  
 And all of Heaven there.

Dear Christmas ! enemy to fear  
 And foe to sable sin,  
 Thou art the day of all the year  
 For Joy to triumph in.  
 The hills are bathed in floods of gold,  
 The frowning clouds are furled ;  
 And cheerful sunlight, fold on fold,  
 Enwraps a loving world.

The skies that bend to meet the sea  
 Are softer on this day ;  
 The winds that stir the holly tree

Are gentler in their play ;  
The crystal flakes that kiss the earth  
Seem purer, whiter far,  
The morning of our Savior's birth,  
Than other snow-flakes are.

Then ring, ye tongues of silver, ring  
Till tremble earth and sky !  
Ye brazen throats, awake and sing  
A world-wide symphony !  
'Neath every roof is white-robed Peace,  
And golden-haired and gray  
Alike from care have full release —  
'Tis merry Christmas Day.

---

**THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY.**

**T**HERE'S many a nobleman dwells in a cot,  
The palace holds many a clown,  
And princes have beds of the tamarind bark,  
While beggars have couches of down.  
Brave kings are in cotton, serfs glory in silk,  
While slaves like an emperor show ;  
For the worth of a title is stamped on the heart,  
But the world doesn't look at it so.

Here misers are prodigally flinging their gold  
To spendthrifts, who hoard in their wake ;  
There mumbles a rake in the gown of a priest  
To a priest in the garb of a rake ;  
Sweet saints there are living in hovels of sin,

And sinners in Sanctified Row ;  
 The heart in the breast is the only true test —  
 But the world doesn't look at it so.

There are generals lying in graves unmarked,  
 And privates with monuments grand ;  
 The ignorant stalk in the chambers of state,  
 While Virtue digs bread from the land.  
 A shadow divergent each object of earth  
 O'ercast from one sun in the sky ;  
 And fancies are many as beings have birth,  
 But the one God ruleth on high.

So I laugh at the title ; that's only a sham ;  
 And at caste — but a silver-washed plate  
 Stuck up on the door of a tenement grand  
 Belonging to Nature's estate.  
 Its inmates are constantly changing and pass  
 Each year out of sight, like the snow,  
 Whose going makes room for the beautiful bloom —  
 And the Savior will look at it so.

---

**WOMAN.**

**S**HUT every door that leads to prosperous life ;  
 He still hath hope who hath a helpful wife.  
 I liken woman to that fragile flow'r  
 That bends its head before the gentlest show'r,  
 But when the forest by the storm is lain  
 Looks brightly up to beautify the plain.

---

**THE AMERICAN FARMER.**

**S**HRILL crows the cock. The misty light creeps  
in

At windows looking on the eastern sky.  
The cattle low and waking fowls begin  
To raise their voices in discordant cry,  
When Farmer John, with many a lusty yawn,  
Deserts his bed and stalks into the dawn.

With lib'ral hand he takes from stack and store,  
And, smiling, feeds his trooping flocks and herds,  
Each known by name. The weak he lingers o'er  
With soothing touch and kindly, cheering words.  
From him they learn obedience and trust,  
They teach him that the gentle are the just.

Compared to his what pleasures may they know  
Who in dull round of cent-per-cent engage ?  
About his feet the billowy grasses blow,  
E'en while the thunders o'er the hill-tops rage.  
Here thick-leaved maples grateful shades extend,  
There cowslip blossoms o'er the brooklet bend.

The sloping uplands clothed in emerald sheen,  
The solemn woods, the fields of velvet corn,  
The clover meadows stretching gay between,  
The lark in carol to the dewy morn —  
These, these are yours with all their clustering  
charms,  
Steel-sinewed tillers of Our Country's farms.

And here among these rich, sequestered scenes,  
 An independent, peaceful path you tread ;  
 No tainting substance e'er your sky terrenes,  
 No marshaled chimneys turn your airs to lead.  
 Above you bends a blue, unsullied dome ;  
 The sun unveiled looks smiling on your home.

---

**TOO LATE.**

**Y**OU call me weak, because, forsooth, I loiter by  
 the way,  
 And, chanting broken bits of rhyme, let slip the  
 full-fraught day ;  
 You chide me that I do not turn each moment to  
 account,  
 And upward on the wings of thought to higher  
 Virtues mount.  
 Had your kind spirit shone about my life in ear-  
 lier days,  
 If then I had but caught one gleam of thy sweet  
 being's rays,  
 If from these gentle finger-tips one touch had  
 kissed my brow,  
 Sweet angel, there were then no need, no cause to  
 chide me now.

You do not fear the bitter world ? You'd brave  
 its scorn for me ?  
 Ah, sweetheart, may you never know how harsh  
 that world can be.



---

If so I loved you less, perhaps — but no! God's  
 mercy, no!  
 I'll sail my troubled bark alone howe'er the winds  
 may blow.  
 Go, go, farewell! Nay, nay, go not! To lose  
 you now — and yet  
 The sun will never shine again when you are gone,  
 my pet.  
 'Tis better so. Sweet love, good-by! I will be  
 strong and brave —  
 Gone! Gone! Now life is naught but death; the  
 bare world but a grave!

---

MEMORIAL MORNING.

“VIRGINIA, open the casement there,  
 I hear the sound of a martial band  
 In the street below. Let me catch the air.  
 The doctor? How; shall *I* not command?”

“There, child, forgive me; old age is quick  
 To anger, in patience a very snail;  
 But I'll to the window; life's shriveled wick  
 Shall blaze once more ere it utterly fail.

“Ah! so; the curtain a trifle down.  
 Ho! Halt you there where sunlight plays  
 So merrily over your locks of brown —  
*They* had just such curls in the dear old days.

“My sweet twin darlings. It cannot be—  
What’s that they are playing? ‘The Tender  
and True?’

You are like your father as like can be,  
And they both come back to me, both in you.

“They are not forgotten! The Nation halts  
In its greedy rush for an hour or so  
To shrive itself of its baser faults,  
Lest it altogether forgetful grow.

“Nay, nay, I am querulous; thoughts like these  
Dishonor Love’s festal, and surely I  
Should honor a custom that strips the trees  
For love of the dead who are not to die.

“For yonder, where Donnelson frowns above  
The Cumberland waters, my darlings rest  
In each other’s arms — in the clasp of love,  
Where they fell, my heroes, breast to breast.

“God sits in judgment! To honor bound  
Were both my boys, though they walked apart,  
But they sleep to-day ’neath a single mound,  
Sleep shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart.

“As in one low cradle they used to sleep,  
My blush-rose babies. What, tears, my child?  
For the Nation’s dead let the Nation weep,  
And kneeling above them be reconciled!

“If palm leaves whispered their lullaby,  
Or North winds shouted their cradle song,  
What matter? Their duty to do and die;  
Their deeds, not motives, to us belong.

“What to me, if the flags that my darlings bore  
Were barred and spangled or azure thread,  
If blue or gray were the coats they wore?  
They were all my world, and my world is dead.

“Where mounds are many go scatter your flowers,  
Ye prosperous people; where mounds are few,  
Where the lone loon calls to the lonely hours,  
Where the sensitive aspen-tree scatters the dew.

“On plain or mountain, by river or wood,  
Wherever a soldier is sleeping to-day,  
Let fall the blossoms in fragrant flood —  
They are sons of one mother, the Blue and the  
Gray.”

---

TO JOHN ALBRO.

HE found my muse — a wayward child,  
In pleasure romping where she would;  
A free-limbed daughter of the wild,  
Sans ribbon, bodice, shoon or hood,  
And led her by persuasive art  
To quiet ways and comely gown —  
Until (the wild-wood in her heart)  
She moves demurely in the town.

**THANKSGIVING HYMN.**

SPIRIT of love ! Creator ! Ruler ! Friend !  
From whom we come and unto whom we tend !  
All humbly now, Thy presence drawing near,  
We sing Thanksgiving for the fruitful year.  
Thy gracious care in every good is seen !  
Beneath Thine eyes the planets move serene,  
Spring, Summer, Autumn, following in their  
round,  
With rich abundance rural toil is crowned ;  
The seeds that fell along the hillside bare,  
A thousand-fold returned, demand our care ;  
With soothing cud the meadows yet supply  
The browsing herd ; the clovers rafter high  
Above the stalls — beneath contented feed  
Sleek, fattening steer and glossy-coated steed.  
Devout of heart, we here our thanks renew  
To Thee who gave the sun, the rain and dew.

Thanks, too, for these ! the anvil's hearty ring ;  
The merry lathes that labor as they sing ;  
The wheezing plane, the saw, the plumb, the rule,  
And every useful, honor-bearing tool  
That may on man one comfort more bestow —  
I'll sing them still and ay my verse shall flow.

Now double blessings to the generous man  
Who measures Nature by the liberal plan !  
Upright and honest ; of forgiving mind,  
E'er thoughtful of his less successful kind ;

Prompt in his action ; just in his decrees,  
 Pleased most to see a fellow-being pleased ;  
 Ne'er over proud because his ventures float ;  
 Who judges not his fellow by the coat,  
 But cries : " Let's prove the heart that throbs  
 beneath !

Damascus blade hath oft a ragged sheath,  
 While swords of lead in gorgeous scabbard shine ;  
 The dearest metal's from the deepest mine.  
 By honeyed accents greatest kingdoms fall ;  
 The dress is nothing, but the *man* is all !  
 Go ! Give thy thanks ! Not as the Pharisee,  
 But in thy closet on an humble knee."

What comfort should we bring to grieving hearts  
 Did we but act as we do know our parts ;  
 How much regret ourselves, ourselves would spare  
 If what we win we might with temperance wear !  
 Proud, halting, weak ! O God, of all above !  
 Still be Thy justice tempered by Thy love.

---

**ON AN OLD DOOR-STONE AT YALE.**

**W**HAT devious paths they since have trod,  
 The feet that wore this granite thin ;  
 But leveled forest, broken sod  
 And temples leaping up to God  
 Tell where their ways have been.

**WELL DONE.**

**F**OR fifty years as man and wife  
They traveled on together ;  
Between them not a word of strife  
In fair or cloudy weather.

Full fifty years thro' sun and storm,  
With cares and griefs a-plenty,  
But fourscore found their love as warm  
And tender as at twenty.

They learned each other's failings, yet,  
Ne'er halting to compare them,  
Strove still with patience to forget  
Or cheerfully to bear them.

The loving are the truly wise  
And Wisdom counsels grieving ;  
When tears of sorrow dimmed their eyes  
They dried them with believing.

Strong in that self-respecting pride  
Which only is deserving —  
From Duty never turned aside,  
They kept her path unswerving.

As dual tendrils intertwined  
Will perish being parted,  
E'en so, his day of life declined,  
She followed, broken-hearted.

---

One marble marks their resting place,  
And, all their story telling,  
"Well done," the simple words that grace  
The stone above their dwelling.

A vine sprung from the hallowed ground—  
O may it ne'er be blighted!—  
In death unites them mound to mound,  
As love in life united.

Where swallows through the ether glide,  
Where nods the fragrant clover—  
The waving, scented clover—  
They sleep in quiet side by side  
Their toils and trials over.

---

EPISTLE TO OPIE READ.

HAIL! goddess of the yellow braid!  
Dear Queen of press and measure!  
Now are the rural toils repaid  
With heaps of shining treasure.  
One song at least be thy reward—  
A stoup of old Burgundy!  
What though 'tis Friday, by the card  
I'll rhyme you here till Monday.

Ye desk-worn! throw your pens aside,  
Discard the puzzling book,  
And come where skies are blue and wide,

And thought is like the brook  
That sings along the hazel slope  
And leaps among the rocks.  
The woods! The fields! Renew your hope,  
And the luster in your locks!

Come where the salmon graceful glide,  
Their golden sides a-quiver —  
Or where the stubborn pike divide  
The swiftly flowing river.  
Come where the partridge-thunder peals,  
And mallards part the rushes  
As o'er the bridge, with creaking wheels,  
The loaded wagon crushes.

Come where the quail prophetic speaks,  
And where the saffron boughs  
The playful jay with sapphire streaks;  
Come where the hungry plows  
Devour the stubble, flashing bright  
At every turn; and swains  
Who strip the golden ears delight  
The fields with jocund strains.

Along the streams the peaceful kine  
Industrious crop the heath,  
Their full-distended bellies shine,  
Their glossy sides beneath.  
While round the sullen monarch glow'rs,  
His front all sable curled,



---

With mutt'rings fierce proclaims his pow'rs,  
Then challenges the world.

My friend, to your creative mind  
These scenes I know are dear,  
For them your converse I resigned,  
For you I sing them here ;  
Nor do all rural subjects bear  
The rude untutored part,  
Full oft the shy reserve they wear  
Conceals a noble heart.

Where blossoms 'broider every path,  
And climbing roses grace  
The cottage doorway, spite and wrath  
Find thorny resting-place.  
Here e'en the ever-boding crow  
Croaks in a smoother way,  
And blackbirds seem each noon to know  
A still more tuneful lay.

At early morn to meet the sun  
My joyful way I take —  
How musical the brooks that run  
To leap into the lake !  
The timid plovers veering rise  
With supplicating cry —  
The pointed pinion swiftly plies  
Along the purpling sky.

A well gorged mink sends cooties shy,  
Loud quacking from the shore —  
(Some farmer's barn-yard beauties lie  
All bloodless on the floor).  
His bead-like eyes a-glisten, thrice  
His home he circles round ;  
Assured there waits no fell device,  
He dives into the ground.

Now fair amidst his shining force  
The god of Day appears.  
Swift up the sky he holds his course ;  
Speed forth the gleaming spears,  
Till every dusky shape is slain  
That steads the course of night,  
And swims the woodland, hill and plain,  
In warm, refulgent light.

When midway in the tender blue  
The sun all shadow cheers,  
I seek the wood and there review  
The book of Hopes and Fears.  
The hoarding squirrel shrilly calls,  
"The winter comes ; lay by !"  
"Enjoy," cries every leaf that falls,  
"Decay and death are nigh."

And now the lonely cushat bird  
Bemoans its absent mate ;  
Now winds the heavy-uddered herd

---

Slow through the pasture gate.  
The careful herdsman stands to count,  
And ere his task be done,  
High up a rocky ledge I mount  
To view the setting sun.

The budding Spring is gay with song,  
The Summer boasts her charms,  
And when old Winter roars along  
How grand are his alarms !  
But Autumn ! Life's dividing line —  
The round year's richest part !  
You've many an abler pen than mine,  
But no more faithful heart.

---

**THE MARTYR PRIEST.**

[In memory of Father Damien.]

I STAND uncovered by a grave  
Wherein a hero molds ;  
Yet never battle-ax nor stave  
His hand embraced, nor weapon, save  
The touch that kindness holds.

No sculptured column marks the place,  
But here by weeds o'ergrown,  
With patient care I faintly trace,  
"The savior of our stricken race,"  
Carved in a cross of stone.

What loving fingers held the knife  
That spelled this ragged line ?  
Though they had every soil to wife  
I'd give a twelvemonth of my life  
To clasp them once in mine.

For one beneath this ivy sleeps  
The world shall longer know  
Than any name the New World keeps,  
Than any e'er from Alpine steeps  
Rang o'er a conquered foe.

His act pales all heroic deeds  
Though twenty Homers sung them ;  
The isle Unclean ! Alas the needs  
Of those on whom that vampire feeds !  
Serene he moved among them ;

And braved a death which e'en in thought  
Appalls our every sense ;  
Day after day in patience wrought  
For those whose slightest touch is fraught  
With woful pestilence.

The blue-rimmed ocean shut him in  
From all his nobler kind ;  
Abandoned in that Isle of Sin,  
By horrors haunted, there to win  
To hope the hopeless mind.

---

The ships that sailed in silence by  
Must e'er anew have stirred  
The memories which could not die,  
The joys of home, love's tender sigh,  
The greeting smile and word.

There might he sit with trusty friends  
At close of winter day,  
And join the cheer that converse lends  
To social mirth when wisdom bends  
To wit's delightful play.

If so he dreamed none ever knew ;  
The ties of earth were riven —  
Priest, brother, nurse, he loved and drew  
His charge to love him and renew  
Their faith and hope in Heaven.

No marble marks his resting place,  
By ivy overgrown ;  
But here with patient care I trace,  
"The savior of our stricken race,"  
Cut in a cross of stone.

---

#### CLOTHES WORSHIP.

**T**HE world will crack the devil o'er the pate  
If, dressed in rags, he peep above the gate—  
But let the velvet hide his cloven hoof,  
He finds a welcome under every roof.

---

**CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE OLD HOMESTEAD.**

**F**ROM low-hung clouds of leaden gray  
The fluffy flakes came down  
Till every shrub and bush was gay  
In bridal wreath and gown ;  
What time the moon, of gibbous form,  
Clear in the heavens stood  
Above the farm-house, sheltered warm  
By the embow'ring wood.

Around the valley, lily fair,  
The hills voluptuous swell,  
A lonely poplar here and there  
Keeps jealous sentinel ;  
The spring brook, with a merry smile,  
Flings in old Winter's face,  
Then gaily glints beyond the stile  
And skips his cold embrace.

The old folk by the chimney nook  
Think on the ones who roam,  
And lamps from every window look  
To light the absent home ;  
Home ! where they first, wee toddlers, crept  
Along the oaken floor,  
Where they were nourished, loved and wept  
To pass beyond the door.

Of all the brood but one remains  
To cheer the parent nest,

---

Support their age and soothe their pains —  
The youngest, dearest, best  
Of all the precious, treasured seven  
Who in their hearts abide —  
Though some are here and some in heaven —  
God keep him by their side.

They come ! The venerable pair,  
With kisses, tears and smiles,  
Give welcome to the strong and fair  
Who've scorned dividing miles  
To meet beneath the homestead roof ;  
Grandchildren trooping round  
In noisy play, without reproof,  
Make all the house resound.

Now sinks the memory of Care  
In Pleasure's golden sea ;  
If Ned and Bess their favors share  
In shadow, where can be  
The harm ? Shall cousins never kiss ?  
The game of forfeits, ho !  
Decorum ! such an hour as this  
Rules her its mortal foe.

Five-summer Edna fairy tales  
With cousin Ralph would share ;  
Maturely eight, his soul regales  
Itself on giant fare,  
Which Dick and Bird, ancients of ten,

Demurely smile to hear,  
Half wishing they were young again  
To hold such trifles dear.

But when the sturdy Welshman Ben,  
By years of service proved,  
Brings in a log two modern men  
Not easily had moved,  
And casts it crashing to the flames,  
Each to the chimney hies  
And hastily an ember names  
To watch it till it dies.

Thus Yuletide hours all gaily fly  
Away on swallow wings,  
And now the time is drawing nigh  
That welcome Santa brings ;  
Then round the fire, in varied groups,  
Are hung the chubby hose ;  
Good-night ! and hopeful childhood troops  
To innocent repose.

O childhood ! sinless as the flakes  
That kiss the clouds good-by !  
The memory of thee awakes  
The suppliant's dearest sigh ;  
And wore I here a monarch's crown  
Above these thinning locks,  
How gladly would I cast it down  
To be a child in frocks.



**LOVE IS NEVER OLD.**

**H**AVE your footsteps lost the lightness  
That in other days they knew?  
Have your eyes forgot their brightness,  
And your locks their raven hue?  
Ah! the years are many, darling,  
Since we first the story told;  
But 'tis sweet to-day as ever —  
Love is never old.

From your cheeks the baby fingers  
Stole the roses one by one,  
But the precious fragrance lingers  
When the flower itself is gone;  
And those hands, grown strong and sturdy,  
Keep us from the storm and cold,  
Lead us by the peaceful waters —  
Love is never old.

---

**CRITICISM.**

“**T**HERE'S something hidden in the book,”  
I said; “some meaning, subtle, strange.  
I'll search it out though I should look  
Behind each word, scan every nook  
Within the author's range.”

Some fingers twining in my hair  
Were still for just a second, then  
A voice as musical as air

Replied : "Alas ! like other men,  
 You crush the dearest buds that grow  
 Along the 'broidered walks of life,  
 In search of flowers that never blow ;  
 In search of that which never grew  
 Despoil a thousand drops of dew,  
 And climb the tree for fruit less sweet  
 Than that which tumbles at your feet.  
 Because a rosebud pleases one,  
 Must he uproot it in the sun  
 To find wherein its fragrance lies,  
 Or note the meaning of its dyes ?  
 Good writers, read by kindred minds,  
 Have nothing hidden in their lines ;"  
 Thus answered me my wife.

---

#### THE APPROACH OF WINTER.

**T**HE laggard morning tints a ragged East,  
 The sun a red and rayless disk appears ;  
 While baffled vapors, fresh from pois'nous feast,  
 The uplands moisten with revengeful tears.

A watchful crow swings cawing from the wood,  
 A lonely mallard flutters from the brake,  
 And Nature, clad in somber cloak and hood,  
 Stirs languidly as she were loth to wake.

The leaves that lately shone so fresh and bright,  
 Now dry and withered, to the ground are cast ;

Where ever round and round in restless flight  
They're driven by the chill November blast.

The sumac in the naked hedgerow bleeds,  
Impatiently the blue jay calls his mate ;  
A crane stalks ghostly through the swaying reeds,  
And Autumn mourns her kingdom desolate.

---

**THE SINGER WHOM NOBODY KNOWS.**

**T**HERE'S a dear little singer come out of the  
West,

A singer whom nobody knows ;  
The weary have only to listen and rest :—  
If biting old Boreas blows  
She pictures the gladness that Summer-time  
brings —  
The violets under the snows,  
Till the air is alive with the rustle of wings—  
This singer whom nobody knows.

She lightens the burdens of toilers opprest,  
This singer whom nobody knows ;  
She coaxes despair from the wanderer's breast.  
Her verse so melodious flows  
It sweetens the speech of the slanderous tongue,  
It chastens the prodigal's woes,  
And soothes the poor bosom by perfidy wrung —  
This singer whom nobody knows.

I would I might find her, this lyrical bee,  
 This singer whom nobody knows ;  
 'Though plain as a sparrow, as charming to me  
 As the delicate breath of a rose.  
 Oh, precious her harvest, if so it be true  
 That the Spirit shall reap as it sows,  
 For she's bringing in lilies and casting out rue —  
 This singer whom nobody knows.

---

#### JOHN M'CULLOUGH'S VIRGINIUS.

GRAND as the eagle with soaring flight  
 G Sweeping the mountain's brow ;  
 Grand as Ocean when storm-mad night  
 Hurls wave on wave till they're crushed and white ;  
 Grand as the prairie whose boundless sweep  
 Is giant rhythm, or still as sleep  
 On the brow of death. What pow'r hadst thou  
 To wake our frenzy or win our tears !  
 "Virginia ! Virginia !" I hear thee now,  
 Though still thy voice as the Roman years.

---

#### THE PESSIMIST.

BEFORE him sweeps the cavalcade of Space ;  
 B Behind him tramps the cavalry of Time ;  
 And 'twixt the two, with hopeless, aging face  
 He struggles through a *chaparral* of crime.

---

**THE SIRE OF EIGHT.**

A LONELY bachelor I came  
Where homelike gardens fringe the town,  
And by a cozy hearthstone flame  
With loving friend I sat me down.

Not forty, and eight times a sire,  
Not forty, and nine voices sweet  
The blessed morning hymn to choir,  
The evening coming-home to greet.

Four clinging girls, four sturdy boys,  
Each dearer than the Ophir mine,  
Not forty, and prospective joys  
Already multiplied by nine.

The rose that bends beside his door,  
While but a single rose to me,  
Ten times for him it blooms and fades,  
Ere drifting to th' Eternal Sea.

Ten hearts to throb with one's success,  
Ten heads to bow with grief of one ;  
Oh, blessed wealth of tenderness !  
Oh, awful poverty of none !

Some lives are like a riven drum,  
Some glad as nesting thrush's mate —  
A lonely bachelor I come,  
To sit beside the sire of eight.

**A SEASON OF PEACE.**

**M**ARCH trumpets and the violet  
Springs up to cheer the wood ;  
E'en so, when storms of Winter fret,  
Does Christmas bloom lest we forget  
The joy of doing good.

Sweet day, when every bosom thrills  
With such a joy as stirr'd  
The Wise Men when, above the hills,  
They saw the Star whose glory fills  
And beautifies the Word.

Now soldiers leave the field of strife,  
And battle flags are furled,  
While in the marts where trade was rife  
There moves a mercy-loving life,  
A charitable world.

Sweet favors are in all that's said,  
And acts do not oppress,  
But joys return we've counted dead —  
He maketh smooth the path we tread  
With special tenderness.

O bells of golden gladness, ring !  
The stream of plenty flows,  
The world has gifts to surfeiting,  
To-day our Brother Christ is King  
And rules the hearts He knows.



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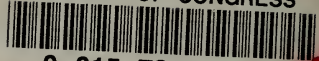
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